

FACULTY RECITAL

THE WEBSTER TRIO

LEONE BUYSE, flute

MICHAEL WEBSTER, clarinet

ROBERT MOELING, piano

Friday, September 18, 2009

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Petite Suite (1889)

(transcribed for flute, clarinet,
and piano by M. Webster)

En bateau

Cortège

Menuet

Ballet

Claude Debussy

(1862-1918)

Mysterion (2009; Premiere)

for flute, clarinet, and piano
(written for The Webster Trio)

Kontakion

Psalm and Trezvon

Richard Toensing

(b. 1940)

Barn Dances (2001)

for flute, clarinet, and piano

(commissioned by the

Flute/Clarinet Duos Consortium)

Forward Six and Fall Back Eight

Divide the Ring (Homage to Gene Autry)

Varsouvianna (A simple dream waltz)

Rattlesnake Twist

Libby Larsen

(b. 1950)

INTERMISSION

Trio for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano (1952)

Introduzione

Intermezzo

Scherzando

Ton de Leeuw

(1926-1996)

Mazurka, Op. 6 No. 1 (1830)

for piano solo

Frédéric Chopin

(1810-1849)

Souvenir de Cuba (1860)

Souvenir de la Havane (1859)

(transcribed for flute, clarinet,
and piano by M. Webster)

Louis Moreau Gottschalk

(1829-1869)

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Petite Suite Claude Debussy

Claude Debussy won the Prix de Rome in 1884 for his cantata *L'enfant prodigue*, and spent two unhappy years (1885-86) at the Villa Medici in Rome. One positive that emerged was his beginning work on *Petite Suite*, which was subsequently finished while traveling back and forth between Paris and Bayreuth in 1888 and 1889. Although himself a pianist and ultimately known as a superb composer of piano music, Debussy developed slowly in this realm. Written for four hands, *Petite Suite* played an important role as a seminal work in Debussy's oeuvre for piano. It is a lighthearted and sunny work without the hint of a cloud anywhere to be seen.

En bateau mimics the rocking of a boat in calm waters; *Cortège* is a procession to a very happy occasion; *Menuet* has a Baroque sensibility, a precursor to Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin*; *Ballet* alternately marches and waltzes. Taken as a whole, *Petite Suite* is typically French and très charmant!

— Note by Michael Webster

Mysterion Richard Toensing

Richard Toensing is Professor Emeritus of Composition at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where he taught from 1972 to 2005 and served as Director of the University's Electronic Music Studio, New Music Festival, New Music Ensemble and for seventeen years as Chair of the Composition and Theory Faculty. Recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, Columbia University's Joseph H. Bearnese Prize, and a commission for the National Endowment for the Arts, Toensing has three times been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony. His principal mentors were Ross Lee Finney and Leslie Bassett at the University of Michigan, where he earned his Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees. In 1991 Toensing met Leone Buyse in Boston when she performed his *Concerto for Flutes and Wind Ensemble* at the New England Conservatory; he subsequently wrote a concerto for her with orchestral accompaniment. She recorded both works in Kiev with the National Symphony of Ukraine in 1998 (CRI CD 856). He has written two works for The Webster Trio: *Children of Light* (2003) and *Mysterion*, which is being heard for the first time tonight. Both works reflect the influence of the Orthodox Church, which he joined in the 1990s.

The composer's prefatory note indicates that the first movement of *Mysterion* is based on fragments of the *Kontakion of the Last Judgment* (Meatfare Sunday) Greco-Byzantine Mode 1 melody, heard in the soprano notes of the piano. The second movement's *Psalm* is based on one of the melodies for Russian Mode 8, which commonly sets the text to (among others) Psalm 23 (Septuagint: Psalm 22). The *Trezvon* is derived from the typical rhythms of the bell-peal played at the end of the Divine Liturgy symbolizing the joy of the heavenly Kingdom.

— Note by Leone Buyse

Barn Dances Libby Larsen

Born on Christmas Eve in 1950, Libby Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum (now the American Composers Forum) at the University of Minnesota, and has since forged an active (and activist!) career outside of academe. She has served as composer-in-residence for the Minnesota,

Charlotte, and Colorado Springs symphony orchestras and has received many awards, including an NEA fellowship and a Grammy. One of the most widely respected and performed American composers, Larsen has developed a style of "liberated tonality," both contemporary and accessible. A prolific writer of vocal music, including operatic, choral, and solo works, she has also written widely for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, large orchestra, and concert band.

Barn Dances was commissioned by the Flute/Clarinet Duos Consortium (FCDC), with generous assistance from the Brannen-Cooper Fund, newEar of Kansas City, and the Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble. The FCDC is a growing, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2000 by Leone Buyse and Michael Webster and currently comprising a dozen professional flute/clarinet duos across the United States. About **Barn Dances** Libby Larsen writes:

Barn Dances is a set of four abstract pieces for flute, clarinet, and piano. Each piece draws its title from the name of a particular dance step used in cowboy dances. Taking the name of the step as a point of departure, my idea was to take a flight of fancy in each movement and to create the musical equivalent of a character drawing.

Forward Six and Fall Back Eight uses fiddle fifths, or the tuning gesture of country fiddling, to propel the idea of six notes rising followed by eight notes descending. The movement has a hoe-down cum jig. The second movement, **Divide the Ring**, is an homage to Gene Autry, one of the great cowboy singers and one of my childhood heroes. In the movement, I composed a phrase of cowboy swing, which is first heard as the introduction to the movement and returns throughout the piece. **Varsouvianna** is a slow, simple, and dreamlike waltz. Percussive, unpredictable in its accents, and virtuosic in its ensemble, **Rattlesnake Twist** can be thought of as a jazz-driven equivalent of a tarantella.

— Note by Leone Buyse

Trio for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano Ton de Leeuw

Dutch composer Ton de Leeuw was one of the Netherlands' most prominent and influential twentieth-century composers. A student of Olivier Messiaen, Henk Badings, and ethnomusicologist Jaap Kunst, he began his compositional career writing music that reflected the styles of Hindemith, Bartók, and his countryman Willem Pijper. During the 1950s de Leeuw helped introduce electronic music and serialism to the Netherlands. As a result of his 1961 visit to India he developed a deep interest in non-Western music and came to be recognized as a composer who stood squarely at the intersection of Western techniques and Eastern philosophy.

De Leeuw once said "The Asians have discovered a few fundamental values in life that I find very appealing, for instance, a continual search for balance. People in the West are more expansively oriented, more enthralled by the creation of tensions. That is something that does not interest me in the least." Though an early work, the **Trio for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano** demonstrates this tenet. Belgian clarinetist and saxophonist Stephan Vermeersch succinctly describes de Leeuw's music: "...rather than progressing from here to there according to Western methods of development...it moves forward through time...setting a basic idea, a musical phenomenon, or a structure in a continually new light."

— Note by Leone Buyse

The French-speaking son of a British-American Jew and a beautiful quadroon, New Orleans native Louis Moreau Gottschalk was without question the most important American musician of his generation. A prodigiously gifted pianist, Gottschalk moved to Paris at the age of thirteen. There he was championed by Berlioz, lauded by Chopin, befriended by Saint-Saëns, and performed by a twelve-year-old Bizet (on a solo piano recital in 1851). He carried on a globe-hopping existence, incorporating local color in the music that he wrote, organizing "monster concerts" of multiple pianos and huge performing forces (one boasting 900 participants!), and giving thousands of piano recitals until literally working himself to death.

Traditional thought subscribes to the influence French music had upon Gottschalk, but closer investigation reveals that the influence was symbiotic, and that Gottschalk placed his own stamp upon French composers, especially Bizet and later, Debussy and Ravel. His earliest compositions brought the rhythms and ambience of New Orleans to Europe. For example, **Le Bananier** (1845), a short piece for piano solo that sounds fairly innocuous in the 21st century, was a smash hit in Europe, selling thousands of copies, influencing composers as far afield as Borodin, and conferring instant fame and fortune upon its young composer.

Souvenir de Cuba (1860) and **Souvenir de la Havane** (1859) date from Gottschalk's first trip to the Antilles, where he found extraordinary acclaim and a lifestyle that suited his romantic personality. **Souvenir de Cuba** opens and closes with tropical languor, but is actually a mazurka with remarkable similarities to Chopin's **Op. 6 No. 1**. The introduction especially features Chopinesque chromaticism which creates tasty and tasteful dissonance. **Souvenir de la Havane** is the first example I can find of the traditional Cuban dance, known as the havanaise or habanera, as a basis for a concert piece. Thus Gottschalk influenced many composers who followed suit, including Saint-Saëns, Bizet, and Ravel. Enjoy the opening melancholy theme, because it never returns, the music evolving into a virtuosic romp.

– Note by Michael Webster

BIOGRAPHIES

THE WEBSTER TRIO (www.webstertrio.com) was founded in 1988 by Michael Webster and Leone Buyse to expand and promote the repertoire for flute, clarinet, and piano through commissions, transcriptions, and research. Since 2000 Robert Moeling has been pianist for the trio, which has performed in The Netherlands, Portugal, and Panama as well as across the United States. Crystal Records has released the trio's **World Wide Webster**, a compact disc featuring works by Brahms, Debussy, Dvořák, and Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Other compact discs include **Tour de France** with pianist Katherine Collier (Crystal) and **Sonata Cho-Cho San**, a Nami/Live Notes release with pianist Chizuko Sawa in Japan. **From Vienna to Budapest** is being released this week in Tokyo on the Camerata label. All four discs feature Michael Webster's transcriptions of four-hand piano music for flute, clarinet, and piano. To date, International Music Co. has published five Webster compositions and transcriptions for flute, clarinet, and piano, including Debussy's **Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune** (1994), **Carmen Rhapsody** (1997), Fauré's **Dolly Suite** (1999), Bizet's **Jeux d'enfants**, and Brahms-Webster **Hungarian Dance Suite No. 1** (2001). International Music will publish Debussy-Webster **Petite Suite** next month.

LEONE BUYSE is the Joseph and Ida Kirkland Mullen Professor of Flute at Rice University. Previously a principal flutist of the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops and a member of the San Francisco Symphony and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, she has appeared as soloist with those orchestras and also with the Utah Symphony and l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. She has performed with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players throughout Europe and Japan, with the Tokyo, Juilliard, Bretano, and Muir String Quartets, and in recital with Jessye Norman and Yo-Yo Ma. Widely regarded as one of America's foremost flute pedagogues, she has taught at the New England Conservatory, Boston University, the University of Michigan, and the Aspen, Sarasota, and Norfolk music festivals, and has presented recitals and master classes across the United States and in Canada, Mexico, Panama, Brazil, France, the Netherlands, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Her solo recordings are available on the Crystal, Boston Records, Albany, and C.R.I. labels.

MICHAEL WEBSTER is Professor of Clarinet at Rice University and Artistic Director of the Houston Youth Symphony. Formerly principal clarinetist with the Rochester Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, he has appeared as soloist with many orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Boston Pops. He has performed in all of New York City's major halls, with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y, Da Camera of Houston, Context, the Tokyo, Cleveland, Muir, and Ying Quartets and the festivals of Marlboro, Santa Fe, Chamber Music West and Northwest, Norfolk, Angel Fire, Sitka, and Orcas Island, among others. Webster has directed chamber music societies in Rochester and Ann Arbor and taught at the New England Conservatory, Boston University, and the Eastman School, from which he holds three degrees. He has also served as Music Director of the Wellesley Symphony Orchestra and Adjunct Professor of conducting at the University of Michigan. As a composer and arranger, he has been published by G. Schirmer, International, and Schott, and recorded by C.R.I., Crystal, Camerata, and Nami (Japan). Highly regarded as a teacher, he is a member of the editorial staff of The Clarinet magazine, contributing a regular column entitled "Teaching Clarinet."

A native of The Netherlands, pianist ROBERT MOELING has gained international acclaim as a soloist, chamber musician, and pedagogue. After coming to the United States as a Fulbright scholar, he subsequently held teaching posts at Bethany College, Concordia University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the Wisconsin Conservatory. He is currently a preparatory piano instructor at Rice University and visiting professor of chamber music at Codarts, the University for the Performing Arts in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. His latest recordings include sonatas of Liszt and Brahms. Mr. Moeling has been a frequent guest with the Amsterdam Chamber Music Society, Sitka Festival, Anchorage Winter Classics, Groningen Festival, Piatagorsky Foundation, and Park City International Festival, where his collaboration with Michael Webster and Leone Buyse first began.



RICE